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Bashful Ballads



Burges Johnson



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I further sez, Be you the cove that hove a rock at me?

Bashful Ballads

BY
BURGES JOHNSON

ILLUSTRATED



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I FURTHER SEZ, "BE YOU THE COVE THET

HOVE A ROCK AT ME?" *Frontispiece* ✓

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HE LAUGHED *Facing p. 10* ✓

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PREFACE

As is well known among etymologists, or will be shortly after the appearance of this book, the word *bashful* is of uncertain derivation. The secondary, or common, use arises undoubtedly from the word's similarity to the root *bash*, v. i.—*to be ashamed*. In its primary meaning, however, it is undoubtedly from the Danish *baske*—blow, strike, drub; Swedish *bas*—beating; hence *bash*—to beat successively as on a drum: “He might soe well bashe uponne a tom tom untyl domesdaye”—Sweetzer, *An Olde Wyve's Tayle*. Hence, *bashful* properly comes to mean *full of rhythmic noise*. There seems to be little ground for the contention, Wittimore in his *Word Parentage* to the contrary, that our adjective *bashful*

derives from the Welsh *bash*, still current among the coal-miners, signifying *full of rubbish*.

For the rhymes in this book, almost without exception, the author is alone responsible. In justice to himself, however, he wishes to state that in preparing "A Bungle Ode" he was abetted by Mrs. Howard Kingsbury; that Mrs. Felicia Hemans collaborated on "The Boarding-house"; and that responsibility for "An Elegy in a City Backyard" rests equally upon the late Thomas Gray, Gelett Burgess, and himself.

A few of the verses herein relating to natural history previously appeared in a volume entitled "Beastly Rhymes," now out of print. Others first appeared in *Everybody's Magazine*, *Good House-keeping*, *Life*, *Harper's Weekly*, and *Harper's Magazine*, and grateful acknowledgment is due these periodicals for permission to reprint.

BASHFUL BALLADS

APOLOGY

I'd rather do rhymes of a morning betimes
Than anything else on the gamut of crimes.
Discursing with versing began with my nursing,
And chasing a metrical thought as it climbs
Is sweet, I repeat—why, e'en as I eat
The chewing I'm doing quite lyric'ly chimes.
Alas, what a pass! My head's a morass
Of singular jingular meters en masse.

Nor do they retreat at the noise of the street,
But tread through my head to the beat of my
feet,
The while each particular ruption auricular
(Jars of the cars, or a hubbub vehicular)
Falls into line, as though by design,
To act as a dactyl or trochee of mine.
Ah me, you can see by the force of my plea,
How troublesome bubblesome meter may be.

One hint is enough for some stuff in the rough,
And I promptly advert to my shirt-sleeve or cuff;
A word I have heard that is odd, or a name
That's odder, is fodder for feeding the flame.
Also the vernacular adds a spectacular
Shine to a line that were otherwise tame.
This shows, I suppose, as far as it goes,
A skill with the quill quite unsuited to prose.

And so, when I'm hit by a rhythmical fit,
I rhyme against time, and I don't, I admit,
Disturb with a curb any verbulular bit,
But build up upon it a sonnet or skit.
I never expect its course to direct,
But let it express its excesses unchecked.
'Tis better than drinking, to my way of thinking,
For others, not I, must endure the effect.

*Pray pardon this praise of my ways, but for days
I've itched to be rich in reward for my lays,
And maybe I might, so well I indite,
If only I had some ideas when I write.*

THE BASHFUL MAN

As I were standin' on the sand a-watchin' of the
brine,

A hefty pebble hit me in the middle of my spine;
And thar behind a dory pintin' nor-nor'west by south
I found a blushin' feller with his finger in his mouth.

Sez I, "Be you a-hidin' here from accident er
choice?"

An' I shook him by the riggin' jest to loosen up
his voice.

I further sez, "Be you the cove thet hove a rock
at me?"

He hemmed an' hawed awhile, an' chawed his nail,
an' sez, sez he:

"I'm a werry, werry bashful man, as one might
truly say;

I git embarrassed orful when a stranger looks my way.

So when I long fer doin's with my feller human
kind,
I'm much too shy to meet their eye, but soak 'em
from behind.

"It's werry hard on me, indeed, to hev sich shrinkin'
ways,—
I've hed a bent fer argyment through all my live-
long days.
But when I think thet folks is wrong in anything
they claim,
I tell 'em so on postal cards an' never sign my
name.

"I allers act on impulse, an' I love a lynchin'
job;
But I'm so shy I allers try to mingle in the
mob;
The thought of offerin' to treat jest scares me to
the bone,
So, though I'm friendly as kin be, I allers drink
alone.

“So now,” sez he, “I’m sure you’ll see, from knowin’
of my mind,

’Twas in a shyly playful way I lammed you from
behind.”

“I bear no grudge at all,” sez I, “your tale is
werry rum;

Your skin is much too thin,” I sez, “it should be
toughened some.”

I tanned him with a dory thwart, I rubbed him
in the sand,

I propped him up agin an oar, it tired him so to stand.

I chucked him neatly in the wet, I dried him in the
sun;

Sez I, “I’m sure ’twill be a cure, you’ll thank me
when I’m done.”

We meet no more along the shore upon my daily stroll;

I like ter think I’ve ben a help to one pore mortal soul.

I sort of guess I cured him—er else I reckon he

Is so werry, werry bashful thet he keeps away
from me.



BALLADS OF THE SEA



THE WRECK OF THE *JUDY B.*

A STORY OF LONG ISLAND SOUND

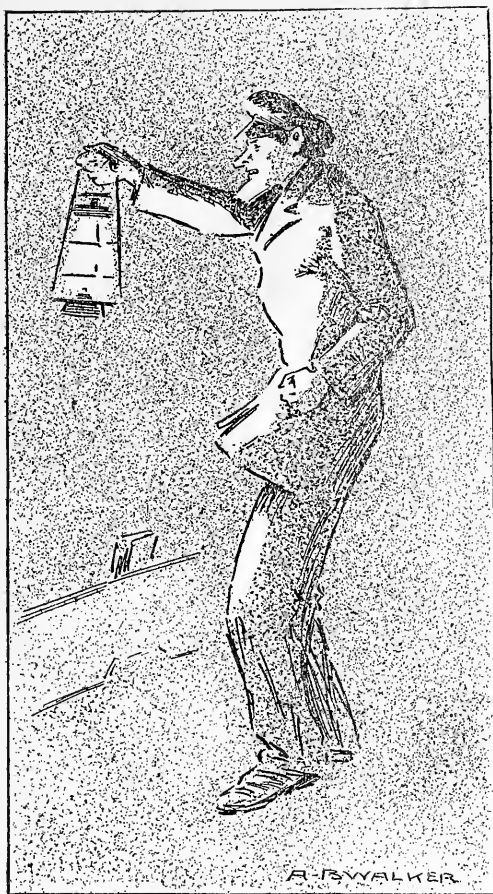
The air was full of stinging brine
And the east wind hurtled free,
When the tugboat captain cast a line
To the deck of the *Judy B.*
And the tugboat captain's brow was dark,
And he cursed beneath his breath
The owner's greed that would give no heed
To a sailor's fight with death.

But the barge's skipper came abaft
On the deck of the *Judy B.*,
And harsh was the mirthless laugh he laughed,
For an untaught man was he;
"I'll no be towed in a sturm like this,
And I'll no cast loose, the day!"
And he shook his fist through the briny mist
And spat in the angry bay.

The barge's skipper's daughter Nan
 Stood close abaft of him,
While the barge's skipper's daughter's man
 Hove by with visage grim.
And the b.s.d.m.'s faithful dog
 Stood steady at the rail,
Though a scared chagrin reflected in
 B.s.d.m.d.'s tail.

But the tugboat captain clenched his hand.
 "Come! Make the tow-line tight!
For the owner says your load of sand
 Must leave Cow Bay this night.
And blow the wind howe'er she will,
 Though hurricanes hold sway,
Though we all be drowned in the seething Sound,
 This night we're on our way!"

Manhasset's lights are far astern,
 The seething Sound is near;
The storm has set the bay achurn,
 While the wind sings dirges drear.



AND HARSH WAS THE MIRTHLESS LAUGH HE
LAUGHED

And the barge's skipper spake an oath—
For a profane man was he—
“Our board's awash, and I swear b'gosh
We can no wi'stand yon sea!”

The Great Neck shore is full abeam,
And the waves roll deck-house high,
When the skipper cried, “We've sprung a seam!”—
Wild fear was in his eye.
Quoth the barge's skipper's daughter's man—
Forsooth a silent lout—
“I reckon we can't ship no sea
Until some sand runs out!

“Fer there ain't no space on this here scow
As big nor a insec's hand,
Nor there ain't a inch of her hold, I vow,
What ain't filled tight with sand.”
But the barge's skipper's daughter paused,
As she wound her clothes-line up.
And she muttered “Hark!”—'twas a warning bark
From the barge-etcetera's pup.

Forrard they crept to where the hound
 Stood faithful to his trust,
And the skipper shrieked, when the truth he found:
 “St. Mike! The rope has bust!”
Ah me, what a fearful plight was theirs—
 Adrift in a roaring sea,
Off a rocky shore with a crew of four
 On the sand-barge *Judy B.*

A-through the seething Sound they swept,
 Past many a villa'd shore,
But what saw they of those lawns well kept—
 They heard but the breakers' roar!
And the barge's skipper bit his nails
 (Small culture did he boast),
For he knew their fate if they struck Hell Gate
 Or the jagged Steinway coast.

But the skipper's maid was keen of sight,
 And she peered through the heavy gloom;
“Oh, feyther, what is yon moving light,
 And the sound of that distant boom?”

“’Tis the boom o’ the surf in Flushing Bay—
Thank God, we are out of reach—
And the lights afar be a trolley-car
A-makin’ toward old North Beach.”

But once again the faithful hound
Barked shrill—there came a shock!—
And their bottom timbers crunched and ground
On the point of a sunken rock.
As hour-glass sands go sucking down,
So their sand seeks the sea—
Their cargo streams through the rending seams
In the hold of the *Judy B.*

The barge’s skipper’s daughter’s spouse
(A silent soul, and grim)
Clumb up to the roof of the frail deck-house
And took his dog with him.
Said he, “The tide is ebbin’ fast,
And I’ll stay by the scow;
Our load of sand’s gone through her, and
She’s settin’ on it now.”

The skipper had seized the deck-house door
To use it for a raft,
When the *Judy B.* she plunged no more,
But lay like an anchored craft.
So he calmed his nerves, and with daughter Nan
He clumb on the deck-house too,
And there they stayed till the storm was laid
And the morning sun shone through.

On a sort of a sand-pile Ararat
Their ark was firm aground;
And the skipper cried: "We've here begat
An island in the Sound.
And we'll raise our flag and we'll live right here,
The boundin' waves amid,
Till the city's paid for the land we've made;
Then we'll buy a farm," which they did.

THE OLD MARINE

"Yes, I were once a marine," said he,

"An' a most *remarkable* one.

An' you've little idee, from the looks of me,

Of the bravery deeds I done.

"But I stirred up sort of a jealous rage

In the buzzums of all the rest,

Till I had ter resign fer the good of the line,

As the admiral thought were best."

"But it isn't an admiral's job," said I,

"To tell a marine to skid!"

He started slightly and answered politely,

"This kind of an admiral did.

"And you've no idee of the things," he said,

"I seen in my long campaign,

From Mindaneco to Chiny and Rio

And all through the swamps of Spain."

“There ain’t any swamps in Spain,” said I.

He answered in tone serene,

“Hev I got ter explain there’s mor’n one Spain,

An’ there’s swamps in the one I mean?

“Put speakin’ o’ swamps—in the Philippines

The mud it comes down in showers,

And you’d certainly laugh ter see the giraffe

I rode fer his wadin’ powers.”

“Giraffes in the Philippines?” I cried—

Perhaps I was too abrupt,

For he sorrowfully sighed and at length replied,

“A gent doesn’t interrupt.

“But speakin’ of beasts—in the ’Stralian bush

Is a thing called a Pattyplus;

One-half of it’s bird, an’ the rest—my word!—

Looks terrible much like us.

“It can throw a stick called a rangaboom

With sech a peeculiar swing

That the thing it hits has curious fits

And runs around in a ring.

"But speakin' of runnin' around," said he,

"When you come to the isle of Guam,
The women you meet ain't got any feet,
And yet they is brave an' calm.

"An' my buzzum bleeds fer their helpless state,

Fer none of 'em ever begs,
So I asks your aid fer a fund I've made
Fer buyin' 'em wooden legs."

"But I am a native of Guam," I said,

And he growled, as he shuffled by,
"I've wasted enough of expensive guff
On such a cheap sort of a guy."

MAROONED

A BALLAD OF THE BRAGGART CAPTAINS

As I was riding along the shore
I came to the town of Battledore,
Whose turbulent coast of sand and rock
Encircles the Bay of Shuttlecock.

Hard by the church where the road dips down
To the ancient wharves of the little town,
I came on a group of grizzled tars
A-gazing through old binoculars.

“Avast!” I cried (I was ever fain
To meet with men on a common plane).
“Is a boat ahoy that is heaving nigh,—
Or what is the reason you pipe your eye?”

They turned at that, and they looked me o’er,
Those silent sea-dogs of Battledore:

Said one to another, "I reckon that
He wants ter know what we're lookin' at."

They whispered a moment, with nod and frown,
Till one of them turned and remarked: "Set down!
Yer a stranger here and yer mind don't splice
Ter no sort of local *prejudice*,

"And we'd like ter larn how ye look upon
The deed we hev recently ben and done."
"Belay," I answered. "Your yarn unfold!"
And this is the tale that their spokesman told.

"Cap'n Reub Pearce of Battledore
Lived man an' boy on this very shore;
A peaceable man—when his hands was tied—
But freighted a bit too much with pride.

"Just over the street, not fur away,
Old Cap'n Fish's anchorage lay.
The ca'mest moorin's ye ever see,
This town of Battledore uster be,—

“Thar never was anchor-draggin’ gales
Ter start us stovin’ each other’s rails
(Except fer sech leetle squalls as come
As a matter of course in a man’s own hum),

“Till Cap’n Fish and his neighbor Pearce
Got started squabblin’ suthin’ fierce.
They each was able an’ peart an’ fit,
An’ I reckon jealousy started it.

“But we got so sick of their daily howl,
An’ their lengthy yarns an’ their cryin’ foul,
We formed a committee on ways an’ means
Fer pintin’ their bows to some other scenes.

“Now, Pearce was strong on a distance swim,—
Er so we all of us larnt from *him*!
But Fish he vummed he could set th’ pace
Fer Reuben Pearce in a swimmin’-race.

“Last Sunday noon when we all was hum,
Waitin’ fer dinner-time to come,

Old Cap'n Fish clumb over the rocks,
Drippin' wet in his pants an' socks.

"An' he vowed he'd swum in a bee-line track
Clear out ter th' Four-Mile Shoal an' back.
Th' Four-Mile Shoal, y' must understand,
'S an island with nawthin' aboard but sand.

"We was all polite, an' we sorter tried
Ter keep from sayin' we thought he lied.
But Pearce piped up, an' he sez, sez he,
'Did yer leave a record thet folks could see?'

"'You bet!' sez Fish,—'With this very hand
I wrote my initials on th' sand.'
Then he turned away, kinder dignified,
And hurried hum whar his pants was dried.

"Thet very night thar was quite a group
A-settin' around Cap Tibbitt's stoop,
When up come Pearce, with his shirt soaked through,
An' he sez, sez he, 'I hev swum thar too!

“‘An’ ef some one doubts, I kin stop his gab,
Fer I wrote “R. P.” on a horseshoe crab.’
Then Fish sez, ‘Huh!’ an’ they started in,
Till we all got sick of them fellers’ din.

“Fer nary one of us neighbor folk
Ever see one of ’em swim a stroke.
An’ we decided thet fer a fact
The time hed came when we’d got ter act.

“Last Monday mornin’ we took them two
In a dory-boat with a chosen crew,
An’ we rowed ’em out ter them four-mile sands,
Whar we put ’em off; an’ we shook thar hands,

“An’ we left ’em a pair of mutton-chops
Fer a final meal, an’ a few gum-drops.
An’ we bound ourselves by a solemn oath
We’d none of us rescue ’em, one er both.

“An’ we sez, ‘Now scrap till yer throats is hoarse,
An’ then ye kin both swim home, of course.’”

The spokesman paused, and he aimed his glass
Out where the stately vessels pass.

Gravely that group of silent tars
Passed around the binoculars.
And I strained my eyes, 'neath a shading hand,
Toward the faint mirage of an isle of sand.

At length one solemnly shook his head—
“Thar’s six days gone, an’ I bet they’re dead!”
I looked at them, and they looked to sea,
And then they silently turned to me.

And I spake the truth that my heart descried,—
“It was justifiable homicide.”
Then I took up my journey along the shore
Away from the village of Battledore.

THE FLIGHT OF THE CLAMOPLANE

A BALLAD OF COW BAY

From the outer end of the village dock
 We dandled our idle feet,
And the cap'n volleyed some bits of rock
 Far out toward the pleasure fleet.

“There isn’t a lugger behind them lights,
 Nor a yacht in the whole dum bay
I couldn’t ’a’ bought if I’d hed my rights,”
 He said in his artless way.

“Yaas, sir, by Gum, I am sayin’ trew—
 If only I’d hed my rights
I mightn’t of known the likes of you,
 From my mansion on the heights.

“I’d ’a’ hed two vally de shams er more,
 An’ a garidge painted green,

An' an iron stag an' a pergalar,
An' a nifty limoseen."

He shifted his chaw to his other tooth,
While I dared no word of doubt,
For I knew that he frequently spoke the truth,
And I knew that the tale would out.

"'Twas long before I hed bought my farm,"
The cap'n remarked at length;
"I was luggin' clams amid storm an' carm,
An' gaining my puppy strength.

"I married a wife thet was young an' strong,
A girl with a might of sand,
An' she an' the kid would come along
An' frequently lend a hand.

"One day we happened along the shore
On a house-boat wanderin' loose,
An' I lifted a couple of frills er more
Fer the wife an' the baby's use.

“An awnin’ strung on an iron rig
Jest fitted my sun-baked craft,
An’ a chugger engine looked neat an’ trig,
So I fastened it shipshape aft.

“An’ there we was with our thin plank scow
Fer cruisin’ around Cow Bay,
But fitted up, as you must allow,
In a most luxurious way.

“I mind me well of a day that came—
It was muggy-like an’ cold,
But we’d planned fer a sort of picnic game,
’Cause the kid were five year old.

“An’ we chugged away fer the open Sound,
Though the clouds was scuddin’ fast,
With little idee whar we was bound
Till Barker’s Point was passed.

“Then the waves got high an’ the wind she rose
An’ under our awnin’ roared,

An' we drove some nails through the baby's
clo'es

To fasten her tight aboard.

"The gale swooped down an' it carromed up

An' stiffened with every hour,

An' our awnin' filled like a shallow cup

With a terrible liftin' power.

"I seen the chances if nothin' gave,

An' I yelled to my wife, 'Sit tight!'

No sooner said than we topped a wave

An' launched on our trial flight.

"'Now out with the forrard sweep,' I screamed,

'An' wiggle it like a tail!'

An' we kept her trim while the baby streamed

Astern by a single nail.

"We shaved the tip of the Sands Point Light,

When the wind took an inward slew,

An' none was nigh to observe the sight
As the first of the biplanes flew.

"Next thing I knew 'twas a chimbley brick
From Fred Green's house we knocks,
An' I yells to the crew, 'Bear upwards, quick!
We're a boat! Keep off the rocks!'

"We landed neat on some private shore
Clean over by Oyster Bay,
An' a man came out of a swell front door
A-warnin' us all away.

"An' the next I knew he was after me
A-grabbin' me by the throat;
'Thet awnin' rig an' the rest,' sez he,
'Was stolen from my houseboat!'

"He took no stock in the deeds we did,
My pleadin' was all in vain,
But jest on account of the wife an' kid
He let us sneak home by train.



"NEXT THING I KNEW 'T WAS A CHIMBLEY BRICK"



"One feller alone seen us ascend,—

He was workin' at Sands Point Light;
An' he told a cousin who told a friend,

An' he told Wilbur Wright."

A SONG OF THE YANKEE

WRITTEN FOR THE SOCIETY OF MAYFLOWER DESCEND-
ANTS IN THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT

We lay in the Bay of Yucatan
While the lighters took our freights:
We landed some fifty tons or more
And the consignee came out from shore
To worry each Indian stevedore
Who handled his precious crates.
He stood on our deck in his gay attire
And yelled as a Greaser does,
Strange Spanish oaths of a lurid hue,—
But he said “b’gosh” when he’d gotten through,
And I knew him for what he was.

A Yank from Maine or from Lake Champlain,
Or maybe from Salem, Mass.
His face was lean and his wit was keen,
And his eye let nothing pass.

In an unmade land or a desert sand
'Tis his especial pride
To do odd jobs for Providence
And help himself on the side.

If you chance to sail uncharted seas,
An unknown shore to gain,
It's ten to one, when you reach the land,
A naked native is on the sand
With a Waltham timepiece in his hand
Or a sardine tin from Maine.
And under a spreading cocoa-tree
There stands a trader's tent,
Where a lonely stranger is selling clocks
And Springfield guns and Stamford locks,
Jack-knives and liniment.

He's from 'gansett Bay or Portsmouth way,
Or maybe New London, Conn.
No thief that's made, in any shade,
Can steal what his eye is on.

He will do to you what *you* meant to do,
And probably do you first,
But if you are both in a hole, you'll find
He's giving himself the worst.

The quaint Korean, with slanting eyes,
In his far-off heathen hut,
Bows down to an idol made of stone,
Or curious wood, or carven bone—
Nor wots that his god on its jeweled throne
Was made in Connecticut.
The Eskimo chases the slimy seal
With a Yankee-built harpoon,
While the child of the Zulu, unconvert,
In a Dorcas Society undershirt,
Disports by some far lagoon.

Oh, the Yankee mind keeps close behind
The Pole hunter's wildest hope,
And in Timbuctoo he has marred the view
With ads. of his shaving soap.

On the wildest land his clever hand
Has writ with a patent pen—
He builds the schools and he fashions tools
For the use of a world of men.

The Yankee inherits a deal of craft
From his stern-faced Pilgrim sires,
Who learned restraint, though they suffered much,
And dwelt in peace with the crabbed Dutch,
And taught the wilderness, at their touch,
To yield what a man requires.
And the mission spirit will drive some Yanks
Wherever a man can roam,
While others with delicate skill design
Wooden nutmegs and hams of pine
To sell to the folks at home.

Where the cacti grow they're sympatico,—
Blood-brothers in Afghanistan;
They treat a Jap like a decent chap and skin their
own countryman.

Where the world is raw each lantern-jaw is chewing
it into shape:—

Then give God thanks that his bony Yanks are
scattered from cape to cape!

BALLADS OF BEASTS



A LLYRIC OF THE LLAMA

Behold how from her lair the youthful llama

 Llopes forth and llightly scans the llandscape o'er.
With llusty heart she llooks upon llife's drama,
 Relying on her llate-llearnt worldly llore.

But llo! Some llad, armed with a yoke *infama*

 Soon llures her into llowly llabor's cause;
Her wool is llopped to weave into pajama,
 And llanguidly she llearns her Gees and Haws.

My children, heed this llesson from all llanguishing
 young llamas,

 If you would llive with llatitude, avoid each
 lluring llay;

And do not llightly llleave, I beg, your lllllonesome,
 llloving mammas,

And lllost of allll, don't spelllll your name in
 such a silllllly way.

A QUAIN PROPOSITION

If prehistoric Polypods,
Prolific, pallid pests,
Now prowled and peered about the place
Pursuing human quests,
While Pachyderms' prehensile paws
Poked out from pulpy nests;
And quarry-questing quadrupeds
Of queer and qualmy hues,
With quantities of quelling quills,
For prey were prone to choose
The quaking, quailing populace
Who quivered in their shoes—

If this were true to-day I guess
You'd mind your P's and Q's!

A POLLYWOGISM

The Pollywog does naught but play
And skip about the livelong day
In a spontaneous, hearty way.
It seems to matter not a jot
If he be in a school or not,
He looks on toil as tommy-rot.
And leaps and creeps and rolls in heaps
And e'en is silly when he sleeps.

A staid demeanor's sure to fail,
And dignity's of no avail
To one who's naught but head and tail.
"I scorn," declares the Pollywog,
"Maturity's dull decalogue,
Until I'm tailless and a Frog;
For me, you see, there could not be
The slightest mite of dignity."

Observe the Frogs, well-groomed and kempt,
From tadpolacious tails exempt,
Who watch their offspring with contempt;
While those of adolescent age,
With tails in half-departed stage,
In shame conceal each appendage.
The Frogs' chief thought, when aught they're
taught,
Is, *caudal'd adults come to naught.*

This moral in italics set:
*Don't act, when gray and old you get,
As though your tail were on you yet.*
(But still, to some, these solemn Frogs,
Contemplative, on mossy logs,
Are sillier than Pollywogs.
Which goes to show, as you must know,
My moral really isn't so!)

THE LAUGHING HYENA

The Laughing Hyena meanders at night,
Equipped with a ravenous appetite.
He hasn't the will nor the skill for to kill
His food for himself, so he wanders until
A lion or leopard comes loping that way,
And he follows behind till they fall on their prey,
Then lingers, a-grin, near the gruesome arena,
In hopes they will share with the Laughing Hyena.

He frequents the places where lions foregather—
And if one so much as remarks on the weather,
He cries, "What a hit!" and he laughs fit to
split,
Till the lion begins to believe he's a wit,
And gains such a taste for applause, that, alack,
He keeps the Hyena close by for a claue.
(I've met many lions who claim that no keener
A critic exists than the Laughing Hyena.)

This sycophant habit obtained such a hold,
That once at a funeral 'twas not controlled;
For he laughed and he laughed, and he chaffed the
giraffe,

Till the relatives rose in the widow's behalf,
And they said: "All the funeral trappings are here
And we guess there is room for one more on the
bier!"

And every one claimed that they seldom had seen a
More impromptu corpse than the Laughing Hyena.

*My child, if you find you're acquainted with folks
Who laugh very hard at your silliest jokes,
With a thin sort of grin e'en before you begin—
Be sure a Hyena lurks under their skin.
And if you are wise you will plan their demise
Ere the smoke of their incense has blinded your eyes.*

A TALE WITH A MORAL

'Twas a gloomy glade 'mid the lowering shade
Of a forest dank and dark;
And every decent creature slept,
For the gray of dawn had scarcely crept
O'er the morning sky. But hark!
Amid the silence there may be heard
The drowsy chirp of the Early Bird.

To the ground he flits, where he lightly sits,
Then hops with a movement gay.
"Cheep-cheep, te-whit!" and he flaps his wings;
"Oh, I am the Early Bird," he sings,
And also "Tu-lu-ra-lay!"
But though he carols it through and through,
His joyful warble does not ring true!

Lo, a twig that lies beneath his eyes
Of a sudden appears to squirm!

And there comes from under his very feet
A faint, fine sound that I can't repeat—

The voice of the Early Worm!

And the glade is stiller than still can be
At the thought of the coming tragedy.

“It is up to me,” sobbed the Worm, “to flee,
Were I not such a sleepy thing.”

But the Bird was wabbly on his feet;

“I'm far too drowsy,” he sighed, “to eat!”

And his head fell under his wing.

And, sweetly mingled, there soon were heard
The snores of the Worm and the Early Bird.

ALACK, A YAK!

'Mid pathless deserts I groan and grieve;
In weariest solitudes I leave

My track;
Bemoaning the fate that has christened me,
In spite of my whiskered dignity,
A Yak!

O happy child with the epithet
Of Abe or Ike or Eliphalet
Or Jack,
You little wot of the blush of shame
That dyes my cheek when I hear the name
Of Yak!

Better a bok or a slithy sloe,
Or a mythical beast in the starry zo-
Diac,

A polypod or a pelican
An auk or an ichthyosaurus, than
A Yak!

And so, through the valleys hereabout
I sob this plea, and the echoes shout
It back;
For the sake of art, and my pride as well,
When you write my name, will you kindly spell
It Yacque?

REMARKS FROM THE PUP

She's taught me that I mustn't bark
At little noises after dark,
But just refrain from any fuss
Until I'm sure they're dangerous.
This would be easier, I've felt,
If noises could be seen or smelt.

She's very wise, I have no doubt,
And plans ahead what she's about;
Yet after eating, every day,
She throws her nicest bones away.
If she were really less obtuse
She'd bury them for future use.

But that which makes me doubt the most
Those higher powers that humans boast
Is not so much a fault like that,
Nor yet her fondness for the cat,

But on our pleasant country strolls
Her dull indifference to holes!

Ah me! what treasures might be found
In holes that lead to underground!
However vague or small one is,
It sends me into ecstasies;
While she, alas! stands by to scoff,
Or meanly comes to call me off.

Oh, if I once had time to spend
To reach a hole's extremest end,
I'd grab it fast, without a doubt,
And promptly pull it inside out;
Then drag it home with all my power
To chew on in a leisure hour.

Of all the mistresses there are,
Mine is the loveliest by far!
Fain would I wag myself apart
If I could thus reveal my heart.
But on some things, I must conclude
Mine is the saner attitude.

A RONDEAU OF REMORSE

Unhappy, I observe the Ass,
Who browses placidly on grass,
 Or bits of wood he will devour,
 While e'en the prickly thistle-flower
Is spicing for his garden-sass.

Last night that lovely golden mass
She called a "rarebit" proved but brass;
 And life I gazed at through a sour
 Unhappy eye!

And as this sleepless night I pass
I learn that he who has, alas!
 An ass's judgment for his dower
 May lack the beast's digestive power.
Oh, miserie! All flesh is grass!
 Unhappy I!

THE GNU WOOING

There was a lovely lady Gnu
Who browsed beneath a spreading yew.

Its stately height was her delight;
A truly cooling shade it threw.
Upon it little tendrils grew
Which gave her gentle joy to chew.

Yet oft she sighed, a-gazing wide,
And wished she knew another Gnu
(Some newer Gnu beneath the yew
To tell her tiny troubles to).

She lived the idle moments through,
And days in dull succession flew,

Till one fine eve she ceased to grieve—
A manly stranger met her view.
He gave a courtly bow or two;
She coolly looked him through and through:

"I fear you make some slight mistake—
Perhaps it is the yew you knew!"
(Its branches blew and seemed to coo,
"Your cue, new Gnu; it's up to you!")

Said he: "If guests you would eschew,
I'll say adieu without ado;
But, let me add, I knew your dad;
I'm on page two, the Gnus' 'Who's Who.'"
"Forgive," she cried, "the snub I threw!
I feared you were some parvegnu!
'Tis my regret we've never met—
I knew a Gnu who knew of you."
(This wasn't true—what's that to you?
The new Gnu knew; she knew he knew.)

"Though there are other trees, 'tis true,"
Said she, "if you're attracted to
The yews I use, and choose to chews
Their yewy dewy tendrils, do!"

The end is easily in view;
He wed her in a week or two.

The "Daily Gnus" did quite enthuse;
And now, if all I hear is true,
Beneath that yew the glad day through
There romps a little gnuely new.

THE FIRESIDE ELEPHANT

Ah me, how frequently I pant
To be a stately Elephant!
With skin so thick and strength so great,
He scorns the puny pricks of fate,
The while his shoulders well may bear
A really untold weight of care.
Ah, were I he, I will aver,
I'd be a model householder!

'Tis possible, I grant you, that
He is not suited to a flat:
Yet you'll admit at once that he
Is builded for economy.
He need not stoop to pick things up;
He needs no valet, cook, nor maid;
His hand is spoon and fork and cup,
And e'en a straw for lemonade!

And what conveniences are these:

When days are hot in fourth-floor rears,
To have a shower-bath when you please

And sit a-fanning with your ears;
Or when the days are wintry chill,

And windows must the air exclude,
To leave one's nose across the sill

While folks below prepare their food.

The Fireside Elephant's a thing
Worth any bard's imagining:

For when his spouse prepares to darn,

His tusks may hold a skein of yarn,

The while, a cook-book in his nose,

He rocks the cradle with his toes,

And trumpets in a manner mild

To gratify his happy child.

Where is the man who would not pant

To be a gentle Elephant?

TO A PIG

Bards and sages, through the ages
(Winning fame instead of wages),
Have mussed up a million pages

With their outcries, small and big,
Singing wrongs that should be righted,
Causes blighted, heroes slighted—
Yet no song have they indited
To the Pig.

Gentle Porcus, suoid mammal,
Does the thought that lard and ham'll
Be your future never trammel
Your fond fancies as you dig?
Does it harrow to the marrow,
As you pace your quarters narrow,
Dreaming of the storied glory
Of the Pig?

For time was, ere man got at you,
Using squalid means to fat you,
That you were to be congratu-
Lated on a figure trig;
And most daintily you ate your
Food, less mingled in its nature;
Fine of face, full fair and graceful
Was the Pig.

Oh, S. P. C. A., be gracious;
If your sympathies be spacious,
Bar such treatment contumacious—
Teach that it is infra dig;
For although some genius flighty
Has described the pen as mighty
You'll admit a sward were fitter
For the Pig.

THE GLAD YOUNG CHAMOIS

How lightly leaps the youthful chamois
From rock to rock and never misses!
I always get all cold and clamois
When near the edge of precipisses.

Confronted by some yawning chasm,
He bleats not for his sire or mamois
(That is, supposing that he has'm),
But yawns himself—the bold young lamois!

He is a thing of beauty always;
And when he dies, a gray old ramois
Leaves us his horns to deck our hallways;
His skin cleans teaspoons, soiled or jamois.

I shouldn't like to be a chamois,
However much I am his debtor.
I hate to run and jump; why, damois,
'Most any job would suit me bebtor!

A LOVE MATCH

'Twas at the races that they met; the Jungle
A. A. U.

Had opened an athletic field upon the Upper
Nile.

Beneath her frank, admiring gaze he strove the best
he knew,

And won a two-mile handicap against the croco-
dile.

It was a contest fine to see! The crowd grew boi-
sterous

And madly shouted, "Hip, hip, hip, hip, Hipp—
opotamus!"

Though Miss Rhinoceros's beaux referred to him
with scorn,

'Twas plain she'd eyes for no one else. "That
brow! Those manly feet!"

“I’m glad he won!” she cried again, and tooted on
her horn—

And so her friend Miss Lioness contrived to have
them meet.

“Such graceful embonpoint!” he sighed, his hand
upon his heart.

’Twas clear to all who stood about he loved her
from the start.

The jungle felt no great surprise when soon their
cards were out.

The wedding was a fine affair, the sourest critics
grant;

Though Dean Giraffe is Higher Church, there’s
very little doubt

That all were better satisfied with Bishop L. E.
Phant.

And now, if Heaven send them twins, ’twill save a
lot of fuss

To name them Hipporoceros and Rhinopotamus.

CONCERNING THE SLOWNESS OF THE SLOTH

My child, how doth
The gentle Sloth
Improve each hour where'er he go'th?
'Tis true that he,
Unlike the bee,
Seeks not for honey ceaselessly.

He's not inclined
To slave, I find,
For others, like the faithful hind;
Nor as the ant
To toil and pant—
He either won't or else he can't.

Yet there are chaps
Like him, perhaps,
Crushed down 'neath heavy handicaps,

And 'tis our place
The facts to face
And honestly to view his case.

Where'er he goes,
He always knows
He has no full supply of toes;
That's why he's not
Inclined to trot,
Lest he should harm the few he's got.

The very crown
Of his renown
Is walking branches upside down.
It is a ruse
That don't conduce
To hurry. Also, what's the use?

And if you'll look
In any book
You'll find him, if I'm not mistook,

Entitled thus:
Didactylus,
Or A-i Arctopithicus.

That name, I guess,
You will confess,
Would render you ambitionless!
So, goodness knowth,
That's why I'm loath
To cast aspersion on the Sloth.

BOOKISH BALLADS



THE MODERN BOOK AD.

Hark! A thousand voices crying, "Come, good folk,
and be a-buying,

Take a book home to your baby or your spouse;
Just exactly what is in it doesn't matter for a minute,
But a book's a handy thing about the house."

"Buy this pink-and-purple cover! Not an up-to-
date book-lover

Is without it, for the author's ten years old;
Seven weeks before 'twas written (and he wrote it
at a sittin'),

Forty-seven thousand copies had been sold!"

"Look at this," cries out another, "buy this 'Letters
to My Mother.'

The author is anonymous, they say;
And criticisms recent say that Chapter Twelve's
indecent,

And the clergy are protesting every day!"

“Please buy this,” a voice is pleading, “if perchance
you tire of reading,

The puzzle-pictures sure will make a hit;
There are maids of divers ages on as many different
pages—

If you guess which one is Bridget, you are it!”

“Buy My tome, all clad in vellum! (see how rapidly
I sell ’em,

Though art is long and times are very hard)
It’s a limited edition—take it home upon suspicion—
It was done into a book in my backyard.”

“Here!” they cry in dreadful babel, “this would
suit your parlor table;

In calf ’twould cost you only a few groats!
See That Hump? It keeps the leather very closely
held together,

S. H. M. is on the Binding, and It Floats!”

Though I’m glad to know the ages of a few pre-
cious sages

Whose novels voice strange views of history;

And I'm really quite excited to learn a book's indited

By a man who takes no sugar in his tea.

Though I read with vim surprising all this modern
advertising,

Which turns an author's fireside inside-out,—

I admit an inclination, as I buy the last sensation,

To learn just what the contents are about!

TASTE FOR LITERATURE

The goat a learned soul is he!
He takes a tome upon his knee,
And be it ever so profound,
In rarest lore though it abound,
Expounded by some ancient sage,—
Yet he'll devour it page by page
With careless mien and free.
Were I a Goat 'twould make me gloat
In glee!

For as the matter stands with me,
I delve in books unceasingly;
Yet some I read, of vast portent,
And never know just what they meant.
I fear (with sorrow be it said)
My stomach's stronger than my head—
A dreadful way to be!
That's why I'd gloat, were I a goat,
You see.

The Goat a cultured taste has he,
And catholic as it can be.
Through libraries he'll browse with zest
And find no works he can't digest.
Though nowadays there's stuff that's writ,
Would give a goat a coughing fit,
Or so it seems to me.

But ah, the Goat a husky throat
Has he.

With clever perspicacity
I've learned a thing that startled me.
Since I myself have writ a book
I scan reviews with anxious look—
And all the papers that I read
Have hired a goat to do the deed—
'Tis true as true can be.
And much I've wrote has smote some goat,
Or stuck, I fear, within his throat—
Ah me!

RECIPE FOR POEMS

Find first thy meter. If the task be hard

Consult thy Keats and Shelley—in them is
Some measure that will suit a busy bard,
(’Twas “Adonais” I used in writing this!).

Then, if thy rhythmic feeling run amiss,
Heed thou the ticking clock—it may transfer
Those beats from out its cranial abyss
All choked with wheels, to where thine own works
whirr—

Then sit thee calmly down before thy typewritér.

Seek next thy subject. Let the matter be

Not as a stranger, but some old, old friend,
As “Death,” “A Daisy,” “Spring,” or “Con-
stancy.”

Then for thy rhyming dictionary send,
For oft its echoing columns hap to lend

A few poetic thoughts to him who gleans.

And keep in mind until the very end—

That line is best if none know what it means.

Thus do the poets write their verse for magazines.

A MAGAZINE POEM

My spirit drank of ecstasy and tears

In that far day when dawn lay on the slopes;
My bosom undulated with the hopes

That Bab el Mandeb felt before Algiers,
Or e'en made grim Protagonistes smile.—

(I guess that ought to hold 'em for a while.)

And all the eyes of Nature seemed to dart

Fond glances o'er the welkin to my feet,
As though her soul distilled its essence sweet
Into the groveling goblet of my heart
And gleamed and glinted with a gracious glee,
And every other way that starts with G.

But then came Night. Great Grief, how it was dark!

And e'en, eftsoon, perchance, ah me, forsooth,
No candle-bearing Pfthytyts showed the Truth,
Or heav'n-high Prophylactus shouted Hark!
Till my bemaddened mind would sometimes think—
And sometimes not. My Soul! I've drunk the ink!

GNATS

Whenever you have met a gnat
And laid him low with hand or hat,
Or fanned at him this way and that,
And cursed such creatures,
I'll vow you've ne'er looked closely at
His salient features.

He has a shrewish sort of face,
A glance demure, with just the trace
Of an impertinent grimace
Which, after all,
You must admit is out of place
In one so small.

And looking closer, I've descried,
When lesser gnats are by his side,
Or midgets, he assumes a stride,
And never mellows.
He has a most vainglorious pride
'Mid smaller fellows.

The fact that folks like you and me
Would notice him at all, you see,
Quite turned his little head, till he
 Lost all perspective;
He's quite puffed up with vanity
 At our invective.

Ah me, it often is the fate
Of little bosoms to inflate
And grow, toward those of like estate
 Quite proud and testy.
That they can e'en annoy the Great
 Has made them chesty.

My son, if you've a pointed pen,
And want to use it now and then,
There are no ways within my ken
 To make Fame love you,
So bad as jabbing fellow-men
 Who loom above you.

AGAINST RAISING THE POSTAL RATE ON MAGAZINES

O Government of our fair land,
Which wisely frames our postal laws,
Before thy gates an earnest band,
The periodic Poets, stand
To plead an humble cause.

The poets of the magazines
Pray heed, in framing thy design!
Observe the patches in our jeans,
Protect our all too slender means,
Our thirty cents per line.

Ten thousand of us in array
March bravely 'neath Euterpe's banner;
One thousand from the U. S. A.—
From Golden Gate to Casco Bay—
The rest from Indianner.

An emblem of thy power benign
We see, and pause before we lick,
On each adhesive stamp of thine,
Behind its innocent design,
Thou placest a big stick.

And wouldst thou make thy income greater
In ways convenient or methodical,
By raising rates on our creator,
That Moral Force, that Mind Inflator,
The mighty Periodical?

As in the business of the Great,
It always is the smallest cuss
Who pays increased taxation rate,
So we can see the hand of Fate—
This will come out of us.

Thy task is noble and immense,
O watchdogs of our Treasury;
Chop through the forests of expense—
Railways, and rural routes, and rents—
But, Woodmen, spare our tree!

OLDE ENGLISH BALLAD

Three knights ryd out of the forest glades,

With a *hey down derry, derry down dey!*

And one was black as the ace of spades,

With a *down hey down, and a derry down dey!*

And one was white as he well could be

Syn he ryd him out of the mud countree,

And one was ryding a toy gee-gee,

Fol de rol, de riddle de rol de ray!

Now the knight as black as the ace of spades,

With a *hi non noni, no nonny hey!*

And the white knight soiled in the forest glades,

With a *ho nonny noni, non nonny hey!*

They fought with the one on the toy gee-gee

And they licked the boots clean off of he—

(You must sing this verse in a minor key)

Fol de rol, de riddle de rol de ray!

And the two that were left whipt out their blades,

With a *hey down derry, no nonny hey!*

And each sent each to the land of shades,

With a *hi non nonny, derry down dey!*

And that was the end of the ryders three.

What terrible tommyrot ballads be!

And nonny and derry mean nothing to me,

So *whim wham whaddie oh! Strim stram straddle oh!*

Heigh ho et cetera rol de ray!

BACHELOR BALLADS



THE LITTLE YANKEE COLLEGE

Since the world was first created there has been some
wear and tear,
And little wheels have slipped their cogs, or rusted
here and there.
So God He built the Yankee, lank and odd to look
upon,
But fit to do the little things that needed to be done.

The Yankee did his duty, but he noticed now and then
The wages that were offered by the devil unto men.
So, lest his children's children be lured and led astray,
Said he, "I'll build them temples that will flout the
devil's pay.

"I'll carve my high commission into tablets made
of stone—
Let the spirit be the Master's and the workmanship
my own."

Firm of will, the Yankee builder did his work and
went before,
And the little Yankee college acts as his executor.

The little Yankee college, it is shadowed now and
then
By mightier machinery for educating men,
But we seem to hear that builder's ghostly whisper,
"I opine
The little mills grind fewer grains, but grind 'em
extra fine."

The little Yankee colleges, God bless them, heart
and soul—
Each little lump of leaven that leaveneth the whole!
What need of mighty numbers, if they fashion, one
by one,
The men who do the little things a-needing to be
done?

THE BOARDING-HOUSE

The gnashing teeth bit hard
On a firm and rib-bound roast,
And the boarders 'gainst a table scarred
The leaden biscuit tossed.

And they frowned with inward storm
As they scanned the dishes o'er,
And recognized in a chowdered form
The things they'd seen before.

Not as the conqueror comes,
Stirred by the trumpet's yell,
They came at the yearn of empty tums
And the sounding supper-bell.

Amid the meal they sang
Small tales of tardy ones,
And eyed with ill-concealéd pang
Each other's sauce and buns.

A dame in watered silk
Who sat beside the urn,
Smiled coldly as she thinned the milk
And doled to each in turn.

There were men with hoary hair
Amidst that hungry group.
Why had they come to wither there
And mumble o'er their soup?

There was woman's hungry eye
Seeking an extra roll;
There was manhood's brow serenely high
Guarding the sugar-bowl.

What sought those reaching arms?
Fat pickings 'mid the dearth?
The wealth of seas—the spoil of farms?
They craved their money's worth.

Save here a stain of broth
And there a gravy trace,
They left a barren, crumbless cloth
Within that boarding-place.

A POET'S FIRST EFFORT

To tell thee of my lasting love

I send this to thee, dear,

To say that throughout all my life

I've ne'er found maid so—queer

—drear

—peer—

Of course,

I've ne'er found maid thy peer.

I love to gaze into thine eyes,

Those windows of thy soul,

So full of tender meaning, love,

Like to a—battered roll

—ton of coal

—distant goal—

To be sure,

They are my distant goal.

I love to clasp thy little hand,
I cannot let it fall;
Your shapely, tender little arm
Is like a—parasol
—worsted shawl
—musket ball
—garden wall—
Just what your little arm is like,
I cannot now recall.

I love the music of thy voice,
I'd listen to it long,
I often think its gentle tones
Are like a—dinner-gong
—something wrong
—angel's song—

Yes, yes,
Are like an angel's song.

Thy wavy hair, thy cherry lips,
Thy merry, silvery laugh;

But more than all, thy graceful form,

'Tis like a—thin giraffe

—brindle calf

—turning-lathe—

You know just what I want to say,

I can't express it half.

And so

I send these verses to you, Love,

I hope that they will take;

For if you should accept my suit

I'd have a—stomach ache

—griddle cake

—Irish wake

—garter snake—

I fear that I can rhyme no more,

I'll stop it for your sake.

IN EDEN

Cupid's getting sere and yellow,
Passing years new wrinkles leave—
Ah, he was a happy fellow
When young Adam courted Eve!

Oh, those happy days in Eden—
One could whisper any bluff,
Sure of finally succeeding,
If he whispered long enough.

He could vow in terms veracious,
Ne'er had he loved maiden more,
Nor in all that garden spacious,
Ever kissed a girl before.

If she said she loved another,
In a manner coy and sweet,
Glad to have him for a brother—
He'd suspect her of deceit.

If he, kneeling, sought to rouse her—
Even Eve was hard to please—
Lucky fellow knew his trouser
Wasn't bagging at the knees.

Cupid's getting old and wrinkled,
Passing years their traces leave,
Since the days when Venus twinkled
Down on Adam courting Eve.

A COQUETTE

The slyest of wiles was her shyest of smiles,
So I hardened my heart to resist,
And I sought to despise that glance of her eyes
And those lips that a saint would have kissed.
But tears on her cheek made my prudence turn weak,
And I hurried to comfort her woe—
'Twas then I was lost, and I found, to my cost,
She had more than one string to her bow.

Yes, dangerous wiles were her innocent smiles,
And eyes that a sunbeam had kissed;
And hope there was none when the sinner had done
What never a saint could resist!
But joys all depart in my sadness of heart,
And life no more pleasure can bring—
Ah, sore is my grieving! that maiden deceiving
Has more than one beau to her string.

A MEMENTO

Sweet Edith, is the summer through—
Those days of happiness with you?

They seemed to vanish with a rush.
Shall you forget me in a day?
I would not have it chance that way,
And so I send this bristle brush.

Perhaps the one who shares with thee
That swing beneath the chestnut-tree,
The one who dares those sleeves to crush,
And steal a kiss, that fellow rash
May wear a beard or soft mustache—
That's why I send this bristle brush.

When in that hammock 'neath the trees,
And swinging in the merry breeze,
Sweet mem'ries rouse the mantling blush;

Then dream that hammock's clasp is mine
And 'gainst those daring lips of thine
Just press this little bristle brush.

Or when the dew is on the ground
And deeper darkness gathers round,
While bedtime brings its wonted hush,
Then standing on the bottom stair,
That soft cheek framed in truant hair,
Just rest against this bristle brush.

FAR BETTER

We played at poker, she and I,
I fear I was her debtor.
The limit of my wealth drew nigh—
I cared not, though she bet me high;
I loved but one—the better.

I bluffed and went a reckless sum,
Assured that loss beset her.
She met my bluff with laughing eye,
(I wish I held that hand, thought I)
And went me one the better.

The game she played was full of guile,
And yet I basely let her.
She won her every bet from me,
Yet what cared I, because, you see,
'Twas I that won the better.

A BASHFUL VALENTINE

Cupid, stern, imperious, bids me write to greet her,
And for once be serious in a merry meter.

What's the use of keeping feelings on the quiet?
Pale from lack of sleeping, thin from slender diet.

Truant thoughts are thronging ever from their duty,
Think of her with longing, dazzled by her beauty.

From her dainty leather, to the hat above her—
I'm so shy I'd never dare confess I—
For the life of me, I can't think
of any rhyme here!

In the lines I drop her, shall I say what's nearest?
Would it be just proper if I called her—
Dear me! I am completely at a
loss for words.

I would quit this versin' if my heart were stouter;
Tell it all in person, with my arm—

Where in thunder is my rhym-
ing dictionary?

Cupid's shot his arrow—Cupid never misses.

(Is this page too narrow for a dozen—

Good gracious! It is certainly
time I stopped this rhyming business.

YE TRUE-HEARTED SWAINE

He vowed hys love woulde mocke att fate, and laughe
att anie teste—

Ah, Constancie, how raire a traite in anie human
breaste!

For she was faire as Saintes above—
Nor Tyme nor Tyde coulde shake hys Love.

“I love thy wavinge flaxyn haire,” he pledd in ac-
cents lowe;

She mett hys trustyng Gaze and sware she’d nott
deceive hym soe—

“’Tis false,” she syghed, “though now bedight
Wyth flaxyn Haire, I’m balde att nyght.”

Ryght brauvly rose hee to ye Teste—“What care I,
thenn?” quod hee.

“Thy damaske cheeke e’en love I beste”—she syghed
right Sorrilie



And raised herr hed, wyth Pitie smote—
Ye Damaske stucke upon hys coate!

Yett spake hee wyth unquenched fyre (wythal hee
shooke beneth):

“Those beaming eyes my Love inspyre, and eke
those pearlie teethe.”

She sobbed: “They’re boughten teethe, alas,
And ye offe Eye is made of Glasse.”

Oddsdeath! Hys voice grewe hoarse wyth dredd—

“That God-lyke form?” quod hee,

“Ah, tell me not”—she bowed Her Hed, nor anie
words spake shee—

Save eke to heave a lyttle sygh,
And winke ye artificial Eye.

Thenn wyldlie lept hee to hys feete, and raysed hys
hande above—

“I sweare that I woulde love thee, Sweet, an I knew
whatt to love!”

“All Fleshe is grasse,” oftsoon he cryd,
And then, forsooth, he uppe and dyde.

And whenn ye Autopsie was tryd, it puzzled all ye
Doctors’ witts,
In learned serch of hys Insyde, to finde hys hearte
in manie bitts.

WITH A BOX OF CANDY

Sweet are these trifles that I send, and yet

Time was I tasted and they seemed not sweet:

The brightest star in all the heaven set

By moonlight pales, and owns a full defeat.

And once my happiness was so complete,

Mere sweetness it was easy to forget:

Sweet are these trifles that I send, and yet

Time was I tasted and they seemed not sweet.

A drowsy horse that knew not whip nor threat—

A box between us on the buggy-seat—

And fed by fingers that one strove to get—

Who could do else but blindly eat and eat?

Sweet are these trifles that I send, and yet

Time was I tasted and they seemed not sweet.

A TOAST TO CLAUDINE

Suppose that the ocean (forgive such a notion!)
Were naught but a vat full of wine.
And lads of each nation, at my invitation,
Sat down at its edges to dine.
I'd cry 'cross the table, "Rise, all who are able,
And pledge me, all ye who know how—
Though often your glasses may clink to the lasses
They'll ne'er ring so sweetly as now—
Here's How!
Skoel! Smike Froken Klaudine!
Dhrink wan drap to me swate-voiced colleen!
Gesundheit! or Prosit!
Each man as he knows it,
Drink deep to the dainty Claudine."

Suppose each good fellow got more and more mel-
low
In pledging so lovely a name.

Till all of the babel slid under the table
And left me alone in the game.
Yet still would I stand there (suppose all the sand
there
Were peanuts and pretzels galore!)
I'd drink up the ocean (Forgive such a notion!)
And 'tween drinks I'd eat up the shore—
And roar—
“Hoch! für die liebsten Klaudine!
The foinest colleen ever seen!
Votr' santé! or Prosit!
I care not who knows it—
I've downed the whole world for Claudine!”

THE BRIDGE

I stood on the bridge at midnight,
When the clock was striking the hour,
And the lamp-post bright was a merry sight
As it danced 'neath the old church tower.

And the load that I had upon me
Was heavy for such as I,
For myriad moons, like toy balloons,
Played tag in a starlit sky.

And I looked on that lone policeman
As one of my worst of foes;
And the clock in the tower was striking the hour
When I stood on the bridge of his nose.

THE CULT OF THE POPPYCOCK

A pale Ahmee and a Poppycock
They gat themselves to a bosky rock.
Said he, "There's a stated hour, I find,
For each pursuit of the human mind;
As the tea-hour tolls for buttered rolls,
So now is a time for swapping souls."
And the Ahmee sighed, as she smoothed her
frock,

"'Tis a purple thought, dear Poppycock!"

"My mind, I find," said the Poppycock,
"Is a crucial key to the cosmic Lock;
'Tis largely due, I would fain aver,
To the astral Is of the As It Were,—
With the tensive strain on my limnal brain,
As I grope for the scope of the It, in vain."
"'Tis a passioned truth, but it brings a shock!"
Purred the pale Ahmee to the Poppycock.

“Now as for me,” mused the lithe Ahmee,
“I sigh the most for the more I see.
Though I yearn and yearn, as you well may wot,
None heed my need of the Basic What,—
Till you scented truth in my color tones,
And caught the thought of our mingled zones!”
“How wonder-deep is the blend!” cried he,
“Of our atmospheres, dear twin Ahmee!”

Said the Poppycock to the pale Ahmee,
“This rock shall live in history;
For while our thoughts so swiftly throng,
Let’s plan for a most select salon,
Where kindred souls may meet to woo
The vague Perhaps of the mystic Who.”
“How sweet a thought, yet how fond and free!—
’Tis a pale-pink plan!” cried the fair Ahmee.

The svelt Ahmee and the Poppycock,
In evening dress and a lissome frock,
And under a blood-red chandelier
Spake jewel-words, now there, now here,—

Of Art, and Truth, and the End of More,—
And the Boundless Since of the vast Before,
And of those who came in a motley flock,
Some cried Ahmee! and some Poppycock!

THE PASSING OF THE AUTO-CRAT

The Auto-crat—oh, think of that!—he went a fearful pace;

He did not smile, though all the while he had a -mobile face.

He took no interest in man, yet sought the human race.

The Auto-crat—oh, think of that!—I never saw him laugh;

In wreckage strowed along the road he wrote his auto-graph.

A horrid smell were suited well to be his epitaph.

The Auto-crat—oh, think of that!—upon his dying day

The only word I overheard he hadn't auto say.

'Twas gasoline that brought about his sad auto-da-fé.

The Auto-crat—oh, think of that!—his end was
 swift and sharp,
I hope it hurt—'twas his desert—though I don't
 wish to carp;
Perhaps he's in a sweeter land and plays an auto-
 harp.

THE COMING AMERICAN

Perhaps when the sturdy ideal
And the hanker for hunting and strife,
Shall make universal appeal,
And we all lead a strenuous life;

When the national forests have spread,
And all of our States are "reserves,"
We'll breed a new race in our stead,
With neither wealth, culture nor nerves.

And over the wrecks of to-day,
When Gotham's a sand-dune and slough,
The Amerind, fiercely at play,
Will chase the wild Alderney cow,



BALLADS OF A HOUSEHOLDER

BE IT EVER SO HUMBLE

Away with summer traveling
To distant cool retreats,
While tempers are unraveling
In stuffy railroad seats.

When August days are sweltering,
And addled tourists roam;
I much prefer the sheltering
Retreat of my own home.

I need no sea's adjacency,
For (tell it not in Gath)
I'm vested in complacency
And seated in my bath.

Nor yet from mountain latitudes
Need I remain aloof,
For oft in lang'rous attitudes
I'm resting on my roof.

I would not golf perspiringly
While all my features scorch,
For I can romp less tiringly
At sweeping off the porch.

At tennis I've played doubles some,
In pleasant linen lugs,
But postures far less troublesome
Are used when beating rugs.

You boast a breeze in birdie-land,—
You vaunt those pipes of Pan's?—
I hear a hurdy-gurdy, and
I feel electric fans.

The forest is no Lorelei
To chant a charm to me,
For though it be immoral, I
Prefer my own roof-tree.

FOOD RHAPSODY

The grievous limitations
Of the poet's intellect
Began with this Creation's
Early dawning, I suspect.
And flowers and lambkins by the yard,
And hearts and darts and spring,
'Tis said the first prehensile bard
Was ever wont to sing.
Oh, why, in all the ages,
Did never one allude,
In fine, immortal pages,
To the joys of Food?
Though my Pegasus be lame,
I will right this deadly shame,—
I will substitute pure nerve for
A true poetic fervor,
Or I'll hire me a lyre,
Just to sing the song of Food.

Food! fubsy Food!
Let me sing in ardent mood
Endless praises,
Though my phrases
Unpoetic be, and crude;
Though the feet are
Prone to teeter,
And the versifying rude,
What meter could be sweeter
Than a song of Food!

The lily is so sweet, it may
Stir poets loud and long,—
But if they tried to eat it, they
Would sing another song.
Then why not sing of radishes,
That bloom for me and you?—
And though it somewhat saddish is,
Oh, why not sing of stew?
Tho' flowers and bowers and summer show-
ers
May suit a certain mood,

I'd spend a *few* poetic hours
On useful Food!
Handsome is as handsome does,
Fairest flower that ever was
Loses luster near a pumpkin,
So upon my harp I'm plunkin',—
For I'm longing to be songing
As I brood upon my Food.

Food! raw Food!
(Or boiled or fried or stewed),
See it wait
On the plate,
Just waiting to be chewed.
Who is tiring
Of admiring,
As its essences exude!
Hot or not, oh, how inspiring
Is the thought of Food!

THE CAVIRABBIOBSTER

The Cavarabbiooster is a captivating cuss,
With an eye like an inland sea;
With an appetite voracious and a massive maw so
spacious
That he doesn't draw the line at you or me—
Whoopee! He'll butter you and dip you in his
tea.
Just as greedily he'll dish up in a stew a tramp or
bishop,
Mercy me!
Quite catholic his taste, though his looks are lithe
and chaste,
He's a bulbous, bilious, bosky-looking, baffula-
cious baste.

He comes upon you quietly, a-tossing on your
bed,—
'Tis thus he has come to me,

And his features wan and pallid were the hue of
lobster salad,

Welsh rabbits formed the skin of either knee,—

Whoopee! He was panoplied with pastry, cap-
a-pie.

The effect of him is utter, and it does no good to
mutter

Fiddle Dee!

For oysters, fried and raw, decorate his either
jaw,—

This Cavarabbiobster with the hot-bread in his
paw.

Have ye seen him, O my brothers, as ye kicked the
clothes about,

When he came with a grin of glee?

And ye fainted, falling, falling, through his vasty
void appalling,

To be grinded up in his machinery.

Whoopee! 'Tis a thing we don't sufficiently
foresee.

Did ye wake the echoes, yelping, "Take away that
second helping!"

Glory be!

Henceforth throughout my life I will hearken to my
wife,—

Tea, temperance and toast, my boy, are good enough
for me.

SPRING DOG-ERAL

Oh, listen close for the voice of spring;
Though faint and fine, 'tis the fairest thing

That ever assailed the ear!

Chilly winter may do for firs,
But wait till the pussy-willow purrs,
And the cows' lips lap the sap as it stirs—

A delicate thing to hear!

But truest tone of them all to me,
I love the bark of the dog-wood tree.

With marshes flaunting a hundred flags,
While every delicate cat-tail wags,

What care I for city mews?

Each blossom blows, like a far-off flute,
And the wilder flowers their pistils shoot,
While all the trumpet-vines tendrilly toot,

Earning their honest dew.

From a litter of leaves comes a sound.

Ah-me!

The shrill bough-wow of the dog-wood tree.

A BUNGLE-ODE

There's a jingle in the jungle,
 'Neath the juniper and pine,
They are mangling the tangle
 Of the underbrush and vine;
And my blood is all a-tingle
 At the sound of blow on blow
As I count each single shingle
 On my bosky bungalow.

There's a jingle in the jungle,
 I am counting every nail,
And my mind is bungaloading,
 Bungaloping down a trail;
And I dream of every ingle
 Where I angle at my ease,
Naught to set my nerves a-jingle,—
 I may bungle all I please.

For I oft get bungalonely
Mingling 'mid the human drove,
And I long for bungaloafing
In some bungalotus grove,
In a cooling bung'location
Where no troubling trails intrude,
'Neath some bungalowly roof-tree
In east bungalongitude.

Oh, I think with bungaloathing
Of the strangling social swim,
Where they wrangle after bangles
Or for some new-fangled whim;
And I know by bungalogic
That is all my bungalown,
That a little bungalotion
Mendeth every mortal moan!

Oh, a man that's bungalonging
For the dingle and the loam,
Is a very bungalobster
If he dangles on at home.

Catch the bungalocomotive;
If you cannot face the fee,
Why, a bungaloan 'll do it,—
You can borrow it of me!

THE OVER-DOING OF IT

When guileful infants mount my knee,
And try if I be grave or tickly,
And stroke my pate and fondle me,
And spread the compliments too thickly:
I say to them, "Aha!
You cannot fool your Pa!
What must I pay for this display?
Come! Tell me what you're after, quickly."

When I was but a little lad,
And blandishments would only bore me,
The female relatives I had
Would sometimes suddenly adore me!
And then I'd think, "Aha!
I'm younger than Papa,—
But I'm so wise that I surmise
You've got some chores and errands for me."

And there's a man you meet through life,
Who in your presence loves to utter
Undue endearments toward his wife,
As, "Love—my Life! Pray pass the butter."
And then I think, "Aha!
You cannot fool your Pa!
When I'm away you change your lay
And doubtless beat her with a shutter."

If now and then my dog appears
And fawns, and yearns to lick my features,
And thumps his tail and droops his ears,
With glance as sinless as a preacher's,
I say to him, "Aha!
You cannot fool your Pa!
You've chased a hen!—Don't sin again—
And *don't* act like us human creatures."

MR. PITT'S HOUSEHOLD DISCOVERY

"My dear," said Augustus Adonirim Pitt,
"'Tis plain to us both that our cook is unfit.
And (pardon my slang) we must give her the mitt.
But ere you replace her I beg to propose
A plan whose proportion continu'ly grows,
Evolved by my brain, as its brilliancy shows.
I have sometimes remarked that the age is at hand
When our offsprings' horizons should greatly ex-
pand;
They should broaden their minds in some alien land.
To which you have always made gloomy retort
Regarding finances—in short, that I'm short.
If barred on such scores
From those alien shores
I propose that we bring them instead to our doors!
Go forth, I adjure you, take time by the hair,
Discharge Emma Susan, then hasten to where
Good Mrs. Intelligence maketh her lair.

“Bring back, if you can, a Castilian retainer
Who’s recently come from some city in Spain, or
From Cuba, where Spanish is spoken much plainer.
While I will buy books in the mean time that teach
Us Spanish geography, customs, and speech.
Dear wife, even now in my mind’s eye I see
Yourself at my side and my children at knee
All mentally traveling over the sea;
While a servant in costume reveals what the soul is
Of true Spanish life, while she serves our *frijoles*.
When the usual month for a servant expires,
Let an African maiden replenish our fires,
And deftly prepare
Some odd bill of fare
While our thoughts are attuned by a Zuluesque air;
The boys could play tom-toms, while I would anon
go
And ply her with questions regarding the Congo.

“Ah, madam, I picture us belting the world;
Each month a new national banner unfurled,
And, in our minds’ eyes, we are giddily whirled

Through Ireland and Denmark and realms Asiatic,
While all of us master, in spirit ecstatic,
New *linguas* with tongues become quite acrobatic."

In the eyes of his spouse
He seemed to arouse
A mute admiration; she sped from the house.
And when all the children got home somewhat later
They gladly set out for the bookstores with Pater.

It hardly befits
My pen or my wits
To lay *very* bare the affairs of the Pitts.
Suffice it to say
They began from that day
To live in a radical, polyglot way,
While curious neighbors remarked that a Nemesis
Seemed monthly to smite every cook on the premises.

The time for the seventh excursion drew near,
When, muffled in bed, Mr. Pitt said: "My dear,
This traveling injures my stomach, I fear.

Chop-suey and rice
I regarded as nice,
Though oft I revolted at visions of mice;
And chicken tomalis
Prove dangerous follies
When everything else is bedizened with spice.
It sickens a person, no matter how well he
Digests, to incessantly eat vermicelli.
Hoe-cake, I admit,
And ham on a split
Were good, though the melons upset me a bit
(That dusky South African proved an imposter
From Kalamazoo, yet I grieved when we lost her).
But the ultimate straw on my stomach is laid,
I very much fear, by this Eskimo maid;
Of all the procession I certainly dub her
The worst! How can Christians subsist upon blubber?
And ever since I
Once chanced to descry
Her drinking the oil from the lamps on the sly,
I've started the stove every morn in the dark,
Lest she should explode by inhaling a spark.

I fear that my scheme, although brilliant, was crude
On its practical side, in the matter of food.
If these cooks could have come, say in batches of
three,
Serving alternate meals, you can readily see
How much less destructive the diet would be;
While blubber *per se* may be perfectly wholesome,
Yet straight for a month it will sicken your soul some.
Unless you can change it whenever you choose, you'll
Suffer a lot from a diet unusual!

“But this food question ain’t
My only complaint—
I’ve troubles enough to disgruntle a saint!
For after my children and I have spent days
On Ollendorf, Berlitz, and various ways
For mastering grammar and accent and phrase
To greet each new maid when she waited on table,
It always transpired we were wholly unable
To get through her head
The phrases we’d read,
And we couldn’t translate any word that she said.

Though my scheme was a great one, I'm forced to
admit

That something was wrong in the practise of it.

I humbly suggest that you get on the track

Of old Emma Susan and hurry her back.

And if she won't stay

In the usual way

Give her every night out and quadruple her pay."

Two morals belong

At the end of this song:

(1) *Don't travel unless your digestion is strong;*
and

(2) *A masculine life*

With sorrow is rife

Unless one leaves kitchen affairs to one's wife.

YE MORAL TALE OF YE PHYSICAL CULTURYST

Young Abel was a childe, I wot,
Whose miene was grave and sage.
'Twas plaine that he had thought a lott
Despyte hys tender age.
When onlie two, much tyme he spent
On physical development.

Each morninge when he gat hym uppe,
He'd give a merrie shout,
And lyft hys small St. Bernard puppe
And carrie hym about.
Ye dogge was verie small at fyrst,
But ate and grew lyke he would burst.

And though in tyme ye friendlie beast
Grew myghtie bigge and talle,

It irked not Abel in ye leaste,
It was so graduawl.
Ye fulle-grown dogge younge Abel bore
With careless ease when onlie four.

There came a caulfe upon ye farm,
Quite younge and lene and spare;
Each day childe Abel's sturdie arm
Would lyft hym highe in air.
By slow degrees, but sure as fate,
Ye caulfe grew unto cow's estate.

Before ye lad attained to tenne,
His spirit 'gan to pant
For chaunce to fondle now and thenne
A babie elephant.
And when a friende supplied ye lacke,
Younge Abel bore it on hys backe.

Each day he deftlie held aloft
Ye infante pachyderme,



A. B. WALKER

AND LYFT HYS SMALL ST. BERNARD PUPPE AND CARRIE
HYM ABOUT

The whyle hys spirit onlie scoffed
To feel it kyck and squirme.
As yere by yere ye creature grew
Stout Abel's cheste expanded too.

I but record ye symple facts,
And nowise doe implie
That Abel's parents viewed hys acts
Wyth a complaisant eye.
But chyldren who can tosse a cow
Are chided sparinglie, I trow.

Thus waxed ye muscle on thys boy,
As grows ye coral strande,
And yet hys manhood gat no joy
From power wythin hys hande.
For whenne he raised a windowe-sash
Ye everie pane was sure to smashe.

Whene'er he went to shutte a dore,
And used noe force at alle,
He'd pushe ye dore-sill off ye flore,
Ye dore-frame through ye walle.

And if he pressed a ladie's waiste,
Ye ambulance must come in haste.

Hys house was soone a broken place,
Hys wyfe were earlie dede;
Despaire was writ upon hys face,
And bowed hys myghtie hede.

Ye moral is, that oft, my son,
Are calysthenics overdone.

ELEGY IN A CITY BACKYARD

Written in collaboration with Gelett Burgess

The tea-bell tolls for Nell to pass the tray,
The glowing cook winds slowly up the clock,
The ashman homeward wends his weary way,
And leaves a trail of cinders round the block.

Now fade the dingy fences on our sight,
And all the air is still, except, maybe,
Where some street-organ, faintly through the night,
Wafts "Holy City" and "The Bamboo Tree."

Save that from yonder sparsely slated roof
A moping Tom doth moaningly complain
(While other felines darkly hold aloof)
That his Maria lucklessly was slain.

Beneath the shade yon dying pear-tree sheds,
Where rest tomato cans on ashy heaps,

Where cast-off corsets line the pansy beds,
The flattened form of poor Maria sleeps.

The wheezy call of milkmen in the morn,
The cook's insistent, matutinal grouch,
The scissors grinder's harsh and raucous horn
No more shall rouse her from her weedy couch.

For her no more shall wave the threatening broom,
Or busy housewife scat her from the chair,
No children run to chase her from the room,
Or pampered dogs besiege her in her lair.

Oft sought she out appointed rendezvous,
In dalliance spent the fairest of her days,
Or nightly studied, with her art in view,
The acoustic properties of alleyways.

Oft did the predatory cur rejoice
To drive her, quivering, up this lonely tree;
How jocund did she raise nocturnal voice!
How cursed the lodgers, kept awake at three!

Let not some groomed lap-cat e'er decry
The humble realm of that backyard obscure—
The battered gate, the clothes-line whence there fly
The short and simple flannels of the poor.

The boast of Tortoise-shell, the pomp of Manx,
The Persian, bearing pedigree profound,
All dread alike the catcher's nimble shanks—
The public highways lead but to the pound.

Full many a nightly prowler, gaunt and lean,
Has filled this alley with his music rare;
Full many a cat is born to howl unseen
And waste his sweetness on the city air.

Nor you, ye proud, impute to him the sin,
Who in his nightshirt did his window raise,
And, hurling down his missile at the din,
Ended the joyance of her heartfelt lays!

Returning from some animated bust,
Back to his mansion, pale and sick at heart,

Maria's voice provoked his latent lust
For blood; she fell a victim to her art.

Perhaps in this neglected form has been
A soul that in Bubastis might have reigned;
The Goddess Pasht have recognized as kin;
Or ruled Kilkenny ere its glory waned.

Far from the madding crowd she was not fazed,
The while her vagrom fancies made her stray
Along the sequestered alley, where she raised
The nightly noisy tenor of her lay.

For who, to grim insomnia a prey,
That weird elusive being e'er could mark?
Who has not raised his window in dismay
And blindly cast some weapon through the dark?

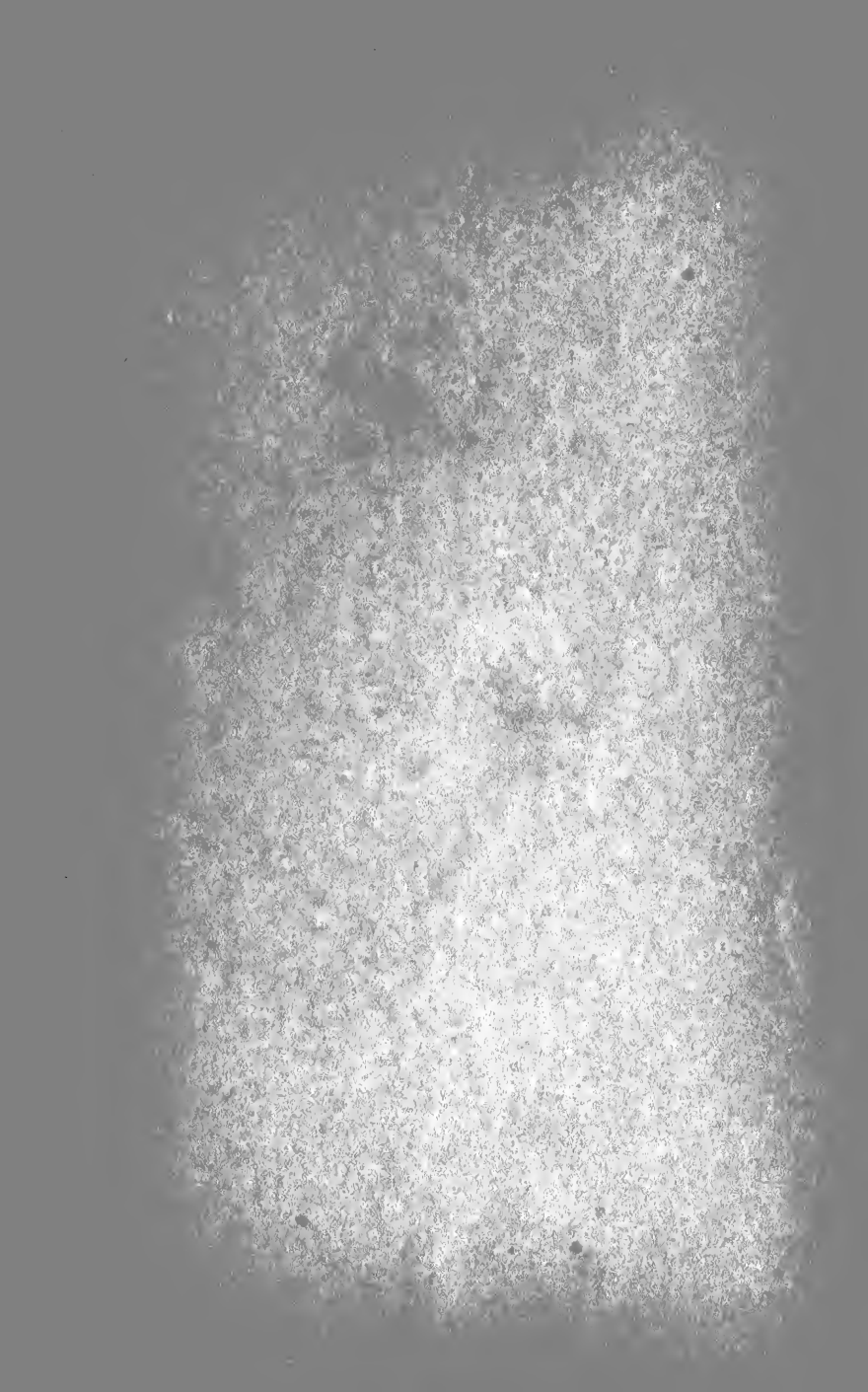
Yet on some pavement, soon or late, there lies
The cat who tortures slumber while she prowls;
While from the tomb the voice of Nature cries,
As some small urchin imitates her howls.

But Requies Cat, now that she is dead
 (Nine times she died, and therefore quite deceased)
Approach and read (with friends to hold thy head)
 This touching tribute to the little beast.

EPITAPH

Here lies poor Puss, with collar unbedight,
 A homeless cat, a thing of skin and bone.
Full-throated rose her swan-song on the night,
 And now the dust-heap claims her for its own.

THE END



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